

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 EB-08 COME-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 IO-13
/103 W

-----125755 281418Z /53

P R 281312Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2307
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 5033

FROM LOW

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, PINT, RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: CONVERSATION WITH CO-MINISTER OF FINANCE,
ERNEST BULLE

1. GRAHAM AND I INVITED ERNEST BULLE TO LUNCH WITH US IN MY ROOM
AT THE MEICKLES HOTEL. IT WAS A SPIRITED CONVERSATION IN
WHICH BULLE, WHO IS PROBABLY THE MOST ARTICULATE AND SELF
CONFIDENT AFRICAN MEMBER OF THE PRESENT REGIME, TOOK A COCKY
POSITION ABOUT THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY AND THE STRENGTH OF THE
INTERNAL SETTLEMENT.

2. BULLE MADE NO BONES ABOUT HIS DISSATISFACTION WITH THE MARCH
3 AGREEMENT AND THE SLOW PACE OF TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY TO
AFRICANS UNDER THE PRESENT REGIME. IT DID NOT BOTHER HIM,
HOWEVER, HE SAID, BECAUSE ON JANUARY 1 THEY WOULD BE IN CONTROL
AND THEY COULD PUT UP WITH THE SITUATION UNTIL THEN. HOWEVER,
HE WAS VERY CLEAR THAT WHEN JANUARY 1 CAME THEY WOULD NOT
BE BOTHERED BY THE CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS WHICH HAD BEEN
SO CAREFULLY WORKED OUT IN THE MARCH 3 AGREEMENT. THAT KIND OF
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THING, HE SAID, COULD BE CHANGED OVERNIGHT. SIMILARLY, HE
LEFT NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE SPEED WITH WHICH WHOEVER TOOK
CHARGE OF THE INDEPENDENT COUNTRY WOULD TAKE CARE OF ITS OPPOSITION.

3. WE TALKED AT LENGTH ABOUT THE ALL PARTIES MEETING WITHOUT,
HOWEVER, COVERING MUCH NEW GROUND. BULLE LISTENED AND OBVIOUSLY
UNDERSTOOD THE POINTS WE WERE MAKING WITHOUT COMMITTING HIM-

SELF TO SUPPORTING THE MEETING.

4. WE ASKED BULLE ABOUT THE DAILY REPORTS OF DEFECTIONS FROM THE UANC AND THE ACCUSATIONS THAT IT IS NOW DOMINATED BY A "EASTERN PROVINCE CLIQUE." (BULLE IS AN NDEBELE FROM THE WEST, OF COURSE). HE IS OBVIOUSLY VERY ANNOYED AT THE SITUATION WHICH HE CLAIMS IS ENTIRELY A PRESS CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE UANC, LED CHIEFLY BY THE PATRIOTIC FRONT ORIENTED SALISBURY DAILY, THE ZIMBABWE TIMES.

5. WE ASKED BULLE ABOUT FREQUENT REPORTS WE HEAR OF NDEBELE DEMANDS FOR SPECIAL REPRESENTATION IN THE PARLIAMENT OF INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THIS WAS A SERIOUS PROBLEM. THE MISTAKE, HE SAID, HAD BEEN TO GIVE THE NDEBELE CHIEFS EQUAL NUMBER WITH THE SHONA CHIEFS IN THE SENATE PROPOSED IN THE NEW CONSTITUTION. NOW THEY ARE DEMANDING THE SAME THING IN THE PARLIAMENT. THIS, OF COURSE, IS IMPOSSIBLE AND BULLE SAID IT IS CREATING A SERIOUS COUNTER REACTION AMONG THE SHONA.

6. COMMENT: IN HIS FIELD, BULLE IS IMPRESSIVE. HE APPEARS TO BE A GOOD ADMINISTRATOR AND A DECISIVE, PERCEPTIVE ECONOMIC POLICY MAKER. HE WOULD CLEARLY LIKE THE POLITICIANS TO STRAIGHTEN THINS OUT SO THAT HE CAN BE LEFT TO RUN THE ECONOMIC PROGRAMS OF THE COUNTRY IN AN EFFICIENT MANNER. AS WITH SO MANY OTHERS LIKE BULLE, HE HAS LITTLE ATTACHMENT TO FUNDAMENTAL

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DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AND WOULD MUCH RATHER BE ALLOWED TO RUN THE ECONOMY IN A TIGHTLY CONTROLLED AUTHORIZATIAN STRUCTURE. IN POLITICS HE IS DOGMATIC, NAIVE, AND INCLINED TO STRONG PARTISANSHIP.

7. IT IS HARD TO KNOW HOW MUCH WEIGHT TO PUT ON HIS CONCERN OVER GROWING NDEBELE NATIONALISM. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT TRIBAL CONSCIOUSNESS IS GROWING AT THE MOMENT WITHIN RHODESIA. IF ENCOURAGED, IT CAN BECOME MORE AND MORE DEVISIVE. IF, HOWEVER, NKOMO EMERGES IN A POSITION OF STRONG AUTHORITY, NDEBELE NATIONALISM COULD PROBABLY BE CONTAINED AND THE MAJORITY SHONA WOULD BE ALLOWED TO PLAY THEIR ROLE IN MOST OF THE POSITIONS OF AUTHORITY. IT SEEMS TO BE A THREAT ON THE HORIZON RATHER THAN AN ACTUAL AND IMMEDIATE DANGER TO THE ALREADY COMPLICATED POLITICAL PICTURE IN RHODESIA.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FINANCE, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978PRETOR05033
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780351-0079
Format: TEL
From: PRETORIA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780817/aaaaaodu.tel
Line Count: 110
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 7d2b635a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1601863
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RHODESIA: CONVERSATION WITH CO-MINISTER OF FINANCE, ERNEST BULLE
TAGS: PDEV, PINT, RH
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7d2b635a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014